

that we will make a genuine effort to negotiate with the Palestinian side on the basis of the roadmap, which is the framework for future negotiations towards, hopefully, a peace agreement between us and the Palestinians.

I meant precisely what I said. I'll make every possible effort. And in order to examine it carefully and seriously, I will certainly meet with the elected President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas. We haven't yet decided about the timing. It will be in the near future. And I will do everything that I can in order to help create the necessary circumstances for such negotiations to take place, providing, of course, that the Palestinian partner will have to not just to make a public commitment but to be able to deliver on the basic requirements of the roadmap and the Quartet decisions, namely to recognize the State of Israel and its right to exist as a Jewish state, to unarm the terrorist organizations, and to implement all the obligations of the agreement signed between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

So we will make an effort. And I say time and again that we accept the sincerity of Mahmoud Abbas as the elected President of the Palestinian Authority. He is genuine; he is sincere; and we hope that he will have the power to be able to meet the requirements necessary for negotiations between us and the Palestinians. How soon it will be? The sooner, the better. I don't want to prejudge it at this point. I think it's too early. And I didn't come with a timetable to meet with the President of the United States.

We shared our observations. I entirely agree with the vision of the President as it was outlined so brilliantly in the famous speech in June of 2002, which really set the course for all the developments that took place in the Middle East since then and created the possibility for, ultimately, the disengagement, which was a turning point in the history of the Middle East. And we are grateful to the President for the courage that he manifested then in presenting this outline and in being the first to support the disengagement, and carry on in spite of the difficulties and the skepticism and the question

marks posed by different countries at the beginning. Most of them joined in later.

So we are anxious to have negotiations. And we will look and find every possible avenue to help establish a process of negotiations on the basis of these conditions. However, as I said, we will not wait indefinitely. If we will reach the conclusion that in spite of all these efforts, it is impossible to implement the principles of the roadmap through a negotiating process, we'll look for other ways to implement these principles and to ultimately create a situation where there are secured borders for the State of Israel with the population centers in the territories as part of a State of Israel and with a contiguous territory that will allow the Palestinians to establish their own Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel. And hopefully, this is something that will happen within the next three to four years.

Again, I am grateful to the President for the efforts that he was making and for his willingness to examine together with me these new ideas—as he called them, bold ideas—in the event that all other options will not be possible.

Thank you.

President Bush. Good job.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 5:05 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Aliza Olmert, wife of Prime Minister Olmert; former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel and his sons, Omri and Gilad; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority.

Statement on the Death of Lloyd Bentsen

May 23, 2006

Laura and I and the entire Bush family are saddened by Lloyd Bentsen's death. Lloyd Bentsen served in the House of Representatives for 6 years, and he represented the people of Texas in the United States Senate for 22 years. During his time in Congress, he was known for his integrity and for seeking bipartisan solutions to issues facing our Nation. He later became Secretary of the Treasury in President Clinton's administration. As a young man, Lloyd Bentsen served

our country in battle in the United States Army Air Forces, and he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. In 1999, in recognition of his lifetime of service to the United States, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civil award. Lloyd Bentsen was a man of great honor and distinction. We send our condolences and prayers to B.A. and the Bentsen family.

Proclamation 8023—Great Outdoors Month, 2006

May 23, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Great Outdoors Month is an opportunity to celebrate and experience America's natural splendor and renew our commitment to conserve our air, water, and land. During this month, we also honor the dedicated men and women who volunteer to help protect our natural resources.

Americans live amid many wonders of nature. Our Nation's varied landscapes include sandy beaches, expansive forests, emerald waters, and towering mountains. Through biking, swimming, skiing, hiking, and many other activities, Americans are enjoying our country's magnificent scenery and the healthy benefits of outdoor recreation.

To ensure that our natural heritage remains a source of pride for all our citizens, my Administration is committed to conserving America's public lands and natural resources and pursuing environmentally responsible initiatives. We are working to accelerate research into cleaner sources of energy, protect our water sources, and encourage the use of hybrid cars. We have put in place a series of clean air regulations that will help us to meet air quality standards. Through efforts like these, we will continue our Nation's economic growth and protect the environment.

Our citizens play an important role in protecting our natural spaces. Throughout our country, Americans are volunteering in their communities for environmental education

programs, local parks, nature conservancies, and other stewardship opportunities. These devoted individuals are working to maintain park trails, restore wildlife habitats, plant trees, and clear overgrowth. I appreciate these volunteers for their efforts to keep America beautiful, and I encourage all Americans to demonstrate good stewardship and an appreciation for the outdoors. Individuals interested in volunteering can visit the Department of the Interior's Take Pride in America website at takepride.gov.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2006 as Great Outdoors Month. I call on all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities and to spend time enjoying the outdoors.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 25, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 26.

Remarks on Energy in Pottstown, Pennsylvania

May 24, 2006

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. If I talk too long, it's going to be even warmer. *[Laughter]* I really appreciate the chance to come to the Limerick Generating Station. I'm glad to see it in action. More importantly, I was glad to see the people working here, glad to meet them, glad to get to know them. I appreciate their strong dedication to safety. I appreciate their dedication to the consumers you serve.

This plant serves 2 million homes in the area, and it does so in a way that does not require us to pollute the air. It's a perfect example of how we can grow our economy and protect our environment at the same